

Judging by the reaction of Orange County's lawmakers, President Barack Obama's budget isn't going to sail through on Capitol Hill.

"I hate it," said Rep. John Campbell, the member of the local delegation who never fights for federal spending back home. He sees his job as cutting government.

"It increases taxes, spending debt and the deficit when all of those ideally should be going down," Campbell, R-Irvine, said of Obama's \$3.8 trillion spending plan.

Even Obama's decision to cut more than 100 government programs didn't impress the Irvine Republican.

"But overall he increases spending," Campbell said, who compared Obama's cuts in the budget to going on a \$1,0900 shopping spree at the mall but being happy that you saved \$200.

"There were a number of natural savings in this year's budget: TARP money will be paid back; that's a multibillion-dollar natural reduction in spending."

Rep. Ken Calvert agrees that there's just too much spending in Obama's spending plan.

"We need to make sure that all programs are being cut back," said Calvert, R-Corona. "The total spending is unacceptable to most people."

Orange County's lone Democrat, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, agrees that "now that the economy is back from the brink, we need to make a concerted effort to balance our budget and spend taxpayer dollars wisely."

And Sanchez got specific in her budget reaction statement about what she doesn't like about Obama's spending plan.

"We have to eliminate some of the more misguided budget proposals, including the president's plan to provide \$250 million for the purchase of an Illinois prison to house Guantanamo detainees."

But that doesn't mean that the Santa Ana Democrat won't fight to get fuller funding for the Santa Ana River flood control project or the Community Oriented Policing Services grants, both of which Obama is funding lower than local officials would like.

"I will fight tooth and nail to prevent these and other proposed cuts to critical program from being enacted," she said.

Over the next few months lawmakers will begin to slice and dice Obama's budget and eventually try and pass 12 separate spending bills before the new fiscal year begins on Oct. 1.

Often both chambers cannot agree on spending bills and that leads to so-called continuing resolutions that keep the government going until the politicians can agree on spending plans for the various departments.

Sen. Barbara Boxer was positive about the president's proposal.

"While I may disagree with the President on some line-item cuts, I fully agree with the thrust of his budget – creating jobs, jumpstarting our economy and taking important steps toward fiscal responsibility," Boxer said.

Feinstein called the budget "a sober reflection of the challenges our country faces – a nascent economic recovery that is encumbered by deep and persistent unemployment, and the rising costs of national debt and deficit."

And the state's senior senator also said she was "encouraged" by Obama's director to establish a fiscal commission to deal with the long-term solvency of such entitlements as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

Here's a look at how some local interests card in Obama's spending plan:

Santa Ana River.

Always at the top of Orange County's list for federal funding is money for the Santa Ana River flood control project.

Obama proposes to spend \$25 million, about half of what Orange County officials had hoped for.

"Construction will not occur as fast as we would like but it is enough to keep the project going for 2011." said Lance Natsuhara, manager of the project for the O.C. Public Works Department. Natsuhara said the Corps of Engineers could spend more than \$73 million this year if the budget allowed.

The project received \$49 million last year as well as \$17 million more in stimulus money.

Obama proposes cutting the Corps' total budget from \$5.4 billion to \$4.9 billion. The Santa Ana project could still get more money if the O.C. House delegation bans together to earmark more funds for it.

Calvert, who sits on the Appropriations subcommittee on energy and water, said the budget reduction for the project was "acceptable."

"Right now we're on track," said Calvert, R-Corona. He said \$100 million is currently be spent on and by the time it is finished \$250 million will have been spent.

Also included in the Corps budget is \$1.3 million to maintain Newport Beach Harbor.

Still other water projects will probably have to wait for individual earmarks from lawmakers, said Jim McConnell, Orange County's D.C. lobbyist.

"We're always looking for spending for Aliso Creek, which has never gotten any funding," said McConnell, adding that money for a flood control channel in West Orange County could still be added as the budget process proceeds.

#### COPS cut

Obama has made it clear for the past week that he plans to cut spending in non-defense, non-homeland security and non-veterans areas.

One of those he picked is the Community Oriented Police Services program. The Santa Ana Police Department, for example, received more than \$6 million in COPS grants this year.

Obama would cut the program from \$791 billion a year to \$690 billion, a cut Sanchez said, would mean "that local law enforcement agencies will have fewer resources to retain and hire police officers."

#### C-17 axed

For the second year in a row Obama wants to stop buying the Boeing C-17 cargo plane, saying the Defense Department has enough planes to meet its needs.

If we don't receive any orders beyond what we have today we would deliver the last C-17 in September, 2012," said Boeing spokesman Jerry Drelling. This means 5,000 jobs in Long Beach would be lost. And 1,000 of those employees live in Orange County, he added.

Last year Obama also zeroed out the program but Feinstein Boxer and House members, including Calvert, went to bat for the plane. They succeeded in getting 10 more aircraft funded in this year's budget.

Lawmakers are not quite so insistent this time.

Boxer said she will work to restore funding for the program. Feinstein said the Defense Department makes "a compelling argument in a very difficult budget year," but that she will "carefully evaluate the need for more of these aircraft."

Calvert said he wants to see the results of a Defense Department "mobility" study but is skeptical about DOD's assertion that it can continue to rely on the older and bulkier C-5s.

"I think we'd be better off buying new C-17s than rebuilding older C-5s," Calvert said.

Jailed immigrants

For the first time in nearly a decade, a president is proposing that the federal government help states and localities pay to house illegal immigrants who have committed crimes here.

Obama put \$330 million in his budget for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, known as SCAAP. Last year he proposed nothing but lawmakers added in the same \$330 million.

In 2009 California spent more than \$945 million to house criminal immigrants but got back \$112 million from the federal government. Orange County spent \$36 million and expects to get back \$6 million.

Congress members and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said the president's proposal is a good start but more is needed.

Obama's proposal "still leaves California with hundreds of millions of dollars in unfunded costs that should rightly be paid by the federal government," said Schwarzenegger's spokesman, Aaron McLear.